

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Bedford

09 January 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Bedford is a local category B male prison situated near the centre of Bedford. It opened in 1801 and was enlarged in 1849. In the early 1990s a new gatehouse, education block and healthcare centre were added. During the inspection, 455 prisoners were held at the prison which has an operational capacity of 464. Sixty-five per cent of prisoners have a home address within 50 miles of the prison and 73 per cent with 100 miles. Most prisoners are expected to either move to other prisons, or to be released after a relatively short period. The average length of stay is five and a half months, although a typical length of stay is approximately four months.

2. Education is contracted to a college of further education which also runs the education departments in 10 other prisons. The education department has five full-time members of staff, 13 part time and one fractional post. There are currently two full-time vacancies. Courses are offered in information and communications technology (ICT), literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). There are also courses in drawing skills. The department provides some education, mostly literacy and numeracy and key skills, on the wings and in physical education (PE), the kitchens and the contracts workshop. The prison has one contracts workshop which employs 30 prisoners who refurbish headphones for a major airline. The workload is variable and when there is too much for the workshop to cope with, the extra is done by prisoners in the vulnerable prisoner unit. Other prisoners work as cleaners or orderlies. Currently, there is no vocational training in the prison. Four full-time members of staff teach PE, offering the community sport leaders award and courses in weight training and healthy living.

3. The head of learning and skills in the prison, a member of the senior management team, has overall responsibility for the promotion of education and training throughout the prison, including the kitchens, PE and the workshop. She also manages the contracts for both the education provision and the library.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

4. The education department offers two courses in ICT, one at level 1 and one at level 2. They are both nationally recognised and accredited courses. Information technology (IT) as a key skill is also offered by another section of the education department. Learners normally start with the level 1 course, unless they are able to demonstrate that they have already passed it. Learners who complete the level 2 qualification are offered the key skills IT qualification, at either level 3 or 4. There are two part-time teachers and the subject co-ordinator works on a fractional contract. **Currently, 17 learners are working for qualifications in ICT.**

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

5. Learners can take part in a range of PE activities, including volleyball, football, weight training and some minor sports. Accommodation comprises a small sports hall and a large weight-training and fitness room. The activities form part of a structured PE programme organised by a senior PE officer and three PE officers. Recreational PE is organised on a weekly timetable that includes afternoon, evening and weekend sessions. The department offers separate sessions to cater for learners with special needs. There are two gym orderlies who assist with the cleaning, preparation and maintenance of facilities and equipment. Learners can take part in three short-course qualifications, community sports leader award, British weight lifting and open college network (OCN) healthy living awards. One member of staff has assessor qualifications. The department does not have centre accreditation to deliver national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Learners receive information through looking at noticeboards and the induction process. The department normally exceeds its target of 625 purposeful activity hours each week.

6. A civilian catering manager and five civilian caterers manage the catering provision of the main kitchen and officers' mess. The main kitchen provides 490 meals twice daily. Continental-style breakfast packages are provided. There are no communal eating areas for the learners. Twenty-two kitchen orderlies work on two shifts in the main kitchen and are assigned specific tasks to accommodate the daily catering needs. Catering tasks include vegetable preparation, stores management, washing up, frying and food preparation. The only training for kitchen orderlies and servery workers consists of basic food hygiene, which is a mandatory requirement for kitchen workers. Two staff have responsibility for training and two staff are working towards assessor qualifications. There are no learners working towards NVQs at present and the department does not have centre status approval. There is no educational cookery.

Foundation programmes

7. Currently, 54 learners are on foundation courses in the education department. Many learners are taking part in more than one learning session. Most learners take part in courses within the education department. The department offers courses leading to qualifications in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) from entry level to level 2. Key skills qualifications are offered within the centre, and on some wings and in the kitchen. The key skills offered are communication, application of number, IT, working with others and problem-solving at levels 1-4. A drawing skills course is offered, leading to an OCN qualification and an evening art and design course which leads to achievement of the key skill in problem-solving.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	21
Number of learner interviews	66
Number of staff interviews	40

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, programmes in ICT and foundation are satisfactory, as is leadership and management and equality of opportunity. However, quality assurance and PE are unsatisfactory.

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

9. The education department was not able to provide data about achievement and retention rates. Many prisoners are not at the prison long enough for them to achieve a qualification, despite a recently introduced policy of holding prisoners who are due for transfer until they complete their qualification. In ICT, learners achieved a total of 397 individual units from April 2003 to January 2004. The section has a target of 600 by April 2004. The standard of learners' work in ICT is generally satisfactory, with some learners acquiring a very good level of expertise in the use of the software. **In PE there are good pass rates on both courses.** Seven out of eight learners achieved success on one course and 68 were successful on the other. Learners acquire good practical PE skills. In foundation programmes, a satisfactory number of learners achieved a pass in an accredited course. Thirty-six learners achieved a literacy and/or numeracy qualification at entry level, 185 at level 1 and 99 at level 2. **The standard of key skills portfolios in the foundation programme is good.**

Quality of education and training

10. **Standards of teaching and learning in ICT are good.** Teachers are knowledgeable and have a good rapport with the learners. Learners respect teachers and there is a quiet working atmosphere in lessons. **In PE, learners receive a very effective induction programme** which includes an opportunity to trial the equipment under supervision. They are issued with an induction card which is a requirement for any prisoner to use the gymnasium. **In PE lessons they receive good coaching in practical skills.** Teachers give useful coaching tips and learners make good progress. Learners' knowledge is regularly checked and critical points are re-explained. Foundation lessons are well planned and managed. Teachers and learners have a good rapport.

11. **ICT has good learning materials.** These have been written by the ICT staff and take

into account the prison environment in which learners work. However, **the computing resources are unsatisfactory**, with out-of-date computers, no network and no access to the internet or an intranet. **PE facilities are inadequate**. The weight-lifting room is well equipped, but there is not enough cardio-vascular equipment. There are no facilities for outdoor sports and the sports hall is undersized, with a ceiling which is too low for many sports activities. **In foundation there is some poor accommodation** and some of the learning materials are poor. In one room there are not enough chairs and tables and limited storage for materials. Some of the learning materials are out of date.

12. Assessment arrangements in ICT are appropriate. Examination procedures meet the awarding body's requirements. **Recording of learners' progress is good**, with a clear record of what each learner has done during the lesson, what they found difficult and the teacher's comments. **Learners are not set either short, or longer-term targets**. The assessment arrangements in PE are satisfactory, with teachers having a good understanding of how each learner is progressing. **However, this is achieved mostly on an informal basis**. In foundation, learners receive regular feedback about their progress and assessment arrangements are appropriate. Action plans and progress review documents are used to record progress and to set realistic targets.

13. **The range of courses in ICT is not sufficient** to meet the needs of prisoners. Courses are restricted to level 1 and level 2 on the use of **business** software, with no level 3 courses except in IT key skills and no courses with a technical focus. The range of courses in PE is also too small. **There is no schedule offering minority sports although they are provided on an unplanned basis**. The range of foundation courses is appropriate. There are courses from entry level through to level 4 in some cases, but there are no short non-accredited courses for short-stay prisoners.

14. Prisoners are encouraged to take the literacy and numeracy skills test on their arrival at the prison, but this is not compulsory and the prison does not know how many prisoners have literacy and numeracy needs. In ICT, learners are given appropriate advice when they start in the education department, although the assessment of their prior ICT skills is informal. The induction process in PE is effective in identifying learners' individual needs. **Learners in foundation are well supported by their teachers. Learners receive good individual support during taught lessons and with open learning on the prison wings.**

Leadership and management

15. **The recently appointed head of learning and skills has produced a clear strategic plan for education and training**. The plan was produced after consultation with members of staff, the senior management team and the prison governor. The plan is currently being implemented with many new initiatives. Many of these are too new to have had any significant effect on the provision.

16. Communications with the prison governor and senior management team are good. The governor has an in-depth understanding of the education and training provision and the surrounding issues.

17. **The prison has a number of effective links with external organisations**, such as the Bedfordshire and Luton Learning Partnership, the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Shannon Trust. These provide additional benefits for learners. **Training for staff at HMP Bedford is good** and staff are involved in a range of courses which support the strategic plan. For example, staff are taking assessor awards, certificates in education and qualifications associated with their own subject area.

18. **The prison instigates good actions to widen participation.** Prisoners who would find it difficult to access education are targeted by the education department. For example, a new classroom is being developed in the vulnerable prison unit. Laptop computers are now available for prisoners' use on the wings. Prison wing tutors work with those learners who are doing open learning courses.

19. HMP Bedford has a positive approach to a self-assessment report. The report includes all elements of training and education. It has a detailed action plan which is regularly reviewed by the quality improvement group. The report does not include sufficient information about individual areas of learning and sources of evidence are weak.

20. **Management information is not used sufficiently to influence decision-making.** The database being used has been developed recently but does not yet provide the prison with the range of information required to plan the provision effectively. Where data do exist, it is not used effectively. **The education department does not analyse trends to contribute to planning and decision-making.**

21. **The range of education and training provision is too small. There is no vocational training other than in PE.** A number of prison staff are in training to enable them to teach NVQs in, for example, industrial cleaning and food preparation, but these courses are not available as yet. There are approximately 160 available places for education. Many prisoners take more than one course, so there are education places for less than 30 per cent of the prison's population.

22. **Equality of opportunity is not reinforced during lessons.** Equal opportunities issues are not routinely dealt with and they are not highlighted in learning materials. Bad language and unacceptable behaviour are not always challenged.

23. **The quality assurance arrangements are new and incomplete.** The procedures which are in place have not had sufficient time to have had any effect on the quality of the provision. The lesson observations are moderated to ensure consistency.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic-planning
- effective links with external organisations
- good staff training
- effective actions to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information
- insufficient provision of education and vocational training
- little reinforcement of equality of opportunity for learners
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good standards of teaching and learning
- good learning materials
- good recording of learners' progress

Weaknesses

- poor computing resources
- insufficient use of targets for learners
- insufficient range of courses

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good pass rates
- very effective induction and support for learners
- good practical coaching

Weaknesses

- inadequate facilities
- over-reliance on informal processes
- poorly planned training

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good-quality portfolios and written work
- good individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- some poor accommodation and resources
- insufficient analysis of trends to contribute to planning and decision-making

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HMP BEDFORD:

- helpful and supportive staff
- learning new skills which will be helpful to me
- 'learning new skills to help me help my daughter'
- time to think and find a new perspective
- being treated as a student
- learning to manage your own life

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HMP BEDFORD COULD IMPROVE:

- the available equipment
- the range of courses
- the availability of technical courses and higher level IT courses
- the number of courses in music

KEY CHALLENGES FOR HMP BEDFORD:

- extend the range of education and training to meet the needs of prisoners
- increase the range and quality of resources
- introduce a wider range of industrial contract work which has vocational training opportunities
- implement fully an effective management information system
- integrate equality of opportunity comprehensively into education and training
- consolidate existing quality assurance arrangements and extend quality assurance to cover all parts of the provision

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

24. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory but quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good strategic-planning
- effective links with external organisations
- good staff training
- effective actions to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information
- insufficient provision of education and vocational training
- little reinforcement of equality of opportunity for learners
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

25. Strategic planning by HMP Bedford is good. The newly appointed head of learning and skills has produced a clear plan outlining the key points for development. This has been developed through good consultation with the staff, the senior management team and the prison governor. All staff associated with either vocational training or education are aware of and understand this plan. The plan is currently being implemented and a number of the actions are being taken which are intended to either extend or enhance the provision, but have not yet had a measurable effect. The education department has a separate development plan, but the identified actions are not clear and it is not sufficiently detailed to be a useful document. A survey of learners' needs has recently been carried out by the head of learning and skills and the results of this analysis have been incorporated into future course planning. For example, a new course on running a business is to be introduced later this month to meet learners' demand.

26. Communication between the education and training and the senior management teams of the prison is effective. The head of learning and skills is a member of the senior management team and education and training is discussed at every senior management team meeting. The prison governor has a detailed knowledge of the education and training provision within the prison. The head of learning and skills meets regularly with the education manager and on a monthly basis with all the subject co-ordinators. There are quarterly formal subject team meetings. Members of the education team meet every

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day informally.

27. Teaching staff attend quarterly meetings with the rest of the staff from their area of learning, and the subject co-ordinator. Subject co-ordinators have monthly meetings with the education manager and the head of learning and skills. However, there are few meetings between staff at HMP Bedford and education staff at other prisons.

28. The prison has developed good relationships with a number of external organisations to the benefit of learners. For example, the Bedfordshire and Luton learning partnership has funded the development of a classroom in the wing for vulnerable prisoners who would not otherwise be able to access education or training. The local LSC has funded a series of short courses twice a week to broaden the range of opportunities for prisoners. Two of the local colleges of further and higher education provide training opportunities for the education and training staff. Jobcentre Plus has recently become involved in the resettlement programme. The Shannon Trust is funding a programme whereby prisoners who have low levels of literacy and are unwilling to attend classes are helped by a fellow prisoner or a prison officer on the wing. The prison also has a writer in residence who is partly funded by an external charity and partly funded by the prison.

29. Staff training within education and training is good. All training is related to the strategic objectives of the education and training development plan. For example, a number of prison staff are in training to enable them to offer vocational courses in subjects such as industrial cleaning and food preparation. A number of staff in the education department are working towards certificates in education or other teacher training courses. Staff appraisals take place annually, and are reviewed every six months to evaluate staff performance and effectiveness and identify training needs.

30. The prison's support for the development of prisoners' numeracy, literacy and language needs is satisfactory. All prisoners are offered the opportunity to take a literacy and numeracy test on their arrival at the prison. However, this is not compulsory and a number choose not to. The prison does not have a figure for the number of prisoners who have such needs. A recently introduced policy prevents prisoners from working unless they have taken the test and receive the relevant teaching, but it is too early to determine the effectiveness of this policy.

31. The education department has recently developed a database to produce appropriate management information. However, this is not being used effectively and is not able to produce some of the information required by the education department. The information which is available is not currently being used to plan the programme. For example, the results of initial assessments are not analysed to identify the academic ability of learners in order to indicate the resources needed. The number of learners taking part in the range of education courses are not routinely recorded; the management are aware of the number of places being filled, but many learners are attending more than one class. There is no analysis of achievement when compared with attendance. The prison is not able to make judgements about the level of achievement. Although comprehensive attendance records are kept, the identified

reasons for non-attendance by learners are often unreliable.

32. The prisoners at HMP Bedford do not have enough training and education available to them. Although a number of staff are being trained to teach NVOs in, for example, industrial cleaning and food preparation, this facility is not available yet. In PE, the only vocational qualification is the community sports leader award and some weight-lifting awards. The prison has no work-based learning. Contract work is offered to learners on the enhanced wing and in the vulnerable prisoners unit. The work is mundane and repetitive and is associated with the restoration of headphones for a major airline. The work does not provide any learning or vocational training outcomes, except to encourage habits of regular attendance at work. The possibility of other contract work is being investigated. The current contract occupies approximately 30 learners on a full-time basis in a cramped workshop, with poor furniture. Part-time education is provided for learners while at work, although the classroom is small and does not have natural lighting. In catering the only qualification offered is the basic food hygiene certificate. The prison has researched skills shortages within the local area, but a number of key courses, such as those in construction skills, are not offered at HMP Bedford.

Equality of opportunity

33. HMP Bedford has effective initiatives to involve more prisoners in education. Prison induction encourages all learners to attend for an initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills at the education centre and a discussion of the opportunities available to them. Immediate feedback is given about the most suitable programmes and the payment offered for attending sessions. Induction sessions are clear and detailed. Full-time learners do not currently earn as much as employed prisoners, although new proposals for pay rates will change this. A number of initiatives take education to those learners who would otherwise have difficulty accessing it. Vulnerable prisoners have 37 hours education offered to them on the wing, and a programme of courses is intended to encourage learners to develop a range of skills and interests. For example prisoners who have low levels of literacy and are unwilling to attend classes at the education centre are helped by a fellow prisoner or an officer on the wing. Open learning sessions are offered as an extension to the education centre's programme. These sessions are well-managed and learners' attainment is good. Wing tutors have recently been appointed. A jobsearch and interview techniques course is provided by a local community self-help group for minority ethnic ex-offenders.

34. HMP Bedford has comprehensive prison policies to promote positive race relations and prevent harassment and bullying. Prison staff have been involved in implementing these policies at various levels and prisoners' representatives sit on some of the relevant committees, such as the race relations committee. Learners are made aware of the prison's request and complaints procedure as part of their induction. They are given further information about how to follow up any problems within the education centre, with contact names and addresses to refer to. Complaints made within the department are followed up by the education manager and the line manager and action is taken to resolve learners' concerns. All policy statements are displayed prominently around the education centre, on the wings and in other communal areas.

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35. Many courses have waiting lists. The longest of these is 19 prisoners for ICT courses. The prison recognises that because of the short time that most prisoners are at the prison this may mask a greater demand. The allocation of places in education is done on a fair and equitable basis. When a place becomes available it is offered the prisoner who has been waiting the longest.

36. Learning needs are not diagnostically assessed as part of the initial assessment. The subcontracted college does not provide specialist diagnostic training for learning difficulties such as dyslexia, although a training programme is to be provided for staff in March 2004. No adaptive technology is provided for learners with a disability, other than magnifying glasses and spectacles.

37. The establishment has a satisfactory equal opportunities policy which covers discrimination. The equal opportunities committee is chaired by the head of personnel, who has overall responsibility for equal opportunities. He is supported by an equal opportunities officer responsible for race relations, who delivers all the diversity training for staff within the prison and investigates all complaints. The committee has recently been reconvened after a gap with a newly constituted membership. Much of the work on raising awareness about disability is done through this committee. All 15 of the education staff, both full and part time, have now received diversity training, in line with other prison staff requirements. One hundred and fifty-two of the 253 staff at the prison have now been through the training process, but two members of the education staff have not yet been trained.

38. Data about minority ethnic groups are collected and analysed monthly by the equal opportunities race relations officer. They are used to discuss issues at the quarterly race relations committee meetings and have led to changes in provision in education, training and work. For example, the proportion of Chinese prisoners currently on the wing for enhanced prisoners is over 30 per cent. This has led to a change in the way work options are allocated.

39. Equality of opportunity is not actively promoted or reinforced sufficiently with learners during teaching sessions. Equal opportunities issues are not routinely dealt with as part of the progress review process and they are not highlighted in teaching materials. Bad language and unacceptable behaviour is not challenged in some instances. Diversity training is planned for prisoners as an integral part of their induction process and the prison is a pilot site for cultural studies starting in January.

40. A local Imam and chaplain provide regular weekly prayer sessions and services for Muslims and Catholics within the prison in addition to the Church of England services. The Muslim prayer session is attended by over 80 per cent of the Muslim prisoners. However, access to the chapel is difficult for those with restricted mobility, as it is situated up several flights of stairs, with no lift available. Access to the education centre and library, both situated on the second floor, is also difficult for staff and learners with restricted mobility. Although there is a service lift from the ground floor, it is currently in need of maintenance and cleaning and is not used frequently.

Quality assurance

41. The head of learning and skills has recently been appointed and provides a strong focus for quality of provision and continuous improvement in education and training within the prison. A quality improvement group first met in April 2003 and since September has started to meet monthly. The group is making satisfactory progress and is monitoring the action plan created through the self-assessment process. The governor receives copies of minutes from all meetings; regular reports about developments from the group are attached to staff pay slips to raise the profile of continuous improvement.

42. HMP Bedford has a positive and satisfactory approach to the self-assessment process which has been fully introduced and incorporates all training and education activities. Although the report provides insufficient information about the areas of learning, and evidence sources are weak, it includes a detailed action plan with targets and timescales for completion. The action plan is regularly reviewed by the quality improvement group.

43. The provision managed by the further education college has systems for ensuring quality of education and training. Lessons are observed, with findings recorded and fed back to teachers. The process has been reviewed by the college and found to be inconsistent in terms of grading and description of performance. An action plan has been produced by the college to introduce new documents and staff training, but this has not been implemented. The training delivered by the PE and catering department is not included in the teaching observation process and there is an over-reliance on awarding body reports to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through certification.

44. The quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory. Many of the quality assurance arrangements are in the early stages of development, or being redesigned and have not been fully established. Many systems and procedures are informal and considered to be satisfactory, for example assessment and internal verification. Emphasis is primarily on contract compliance.

45. All courses and programmes are subject to annual review by the college and there are regular and frequent meetings between the head of learning and skills and the education manager and contract manager. Learner surveys are carried out, with an analysis of learners' responses to the quality of education and training. The process is not used to set quality assurance targets for the education subcontractor. There are not enough formal opportunities for staff to share good practice, or develop materials with curriculum staff from the main college. College staff at HMP Bedford receive poor levels of support from the main college which is several hours travelling time away from the prison. The prison has no system for the sharing of good practice among the prison's training and education activities.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

46. Training in ICT is satisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good standards of teaching and learning
- good learning materials
- good recording of learners' progress

Weaknesses

- poor computing resources
- insufficient use of targets for learners
- insufficient range of courses

Achievement and standards

47. The education department was unable to provide retention and achievement information for this area of learning. The ICT section has a target of 600 units during the year 2003-04 and has achieved a little under 400 units so far this year.

48. The standard of learners' work is, in general, satisfactory. Most learners are able to use the software with some competence and are able to transfer these skills to new situations. A small number of learners have developed very good skill levels and use the software with confidence in new situations. A smaller number of learners have learnt the necessary skills to achieve a pass grade in the examination, but do not have a deeper understanding of how to use the software in a different context.

Quality of education and training

49. Teaching in ICT is good, with all sessions observed being satisfactory, or better. All ICT is taught through workshops where every learner works at his own pace. Teachers work well with learners on an individual basis. They are sensitive to any difficulties that the learner may be having. In the best lessons, feedback to learners is dealt with very well. Teachers explain where the learner has been particularly successful and then what they have not done well. In these lessons teachers check regularly to see how well learners are progressing. The relationship between teachers and learners is very good, with learners clearly respecting the teachers' knowledge and expertise. Lessons are well

managed and there is a quiet working atmosphere.

50. The learning materials used in ICT classes in the education centre are good. Rather than using commercially produced materials, teachers have produced their own materials which recognise the prison environment in which learners work. Each of the books is easy to follow and they are effective in helping learners to reach good standards of work.

51. Staff are knowledgeable and appropriately qualified. They all have a teaching qualification and a relevant vocational qualification or experience.

52. All ICT classrooms are well decorated. There is a range of ICT-related posters on the walls and the rooms are an appropriate environment for learners.

53. The IT equipment is unsatisfactory. The computers are between four and eight years' old. There is no network and learners must store their work on floppy disks. Although the equipment is adequate for learners to gain the qualifications that they are working for, they cannot experience using a network or the internet, skills which are important outside the prison.

54. Assessment procedures are appropriate and meet the requirements of the awarding body. When a learner is taking an examination, appropriate conditions are effectively maintained by the use of a sign placed on the top of the computer to let others know not to disturb him.

55. Teachers record the progress of learners very effectively. At the end of each session the learners write down what they have learnt and what they have found difficult. The teacher also writes a detailed commentary about the learner's progress. At the start of each subsequent lesson the teacher is able to use this information to assess how the learner may be helped.

56. Learners are not given targets. Individual learning plans are produced but are largely a list of modules for the learner to complete and do not have target dates for completion of the course, or milestones for completion of modules. When a learner completes a module he is given choice of which module to study next, but he is not given any indication of an anticipated completion date.

57. The range of courses offered is narrow and does not meet the needs of all prisoners. Other than key skills, there are no level 3 courses for those learners who have significant previous experience of computers, or who complete the level 2 while they are at HMP Bedford. All courses are associated with the use of office software and there are no courses of a technical nature, such as programming or computer technician.

58. All learners who choose to take an ICT course are interviewed to determine what course they should do. The teacher identifies the learner's level of competence in the use of ICT and, after discussion with the learner, determines what course is most appropriate. This process is informal and does not include a detailed assessment of the

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learner's ICT skills. However, learners who demonstrate good skills when they start the level 1 course are moved through the qualification more quickly. Learners are well supported by staff and there are good relationships between staff and learners. Learners who need it have access to numeracy and literacy support.

Leadership and management

59. The leadership and management of ICT is satisfactory. HMP Bedford has a clear strategy for the education department as whole. Although this is not reflected in a detailed strategy for the ICT section, staff understand the broad details of the department's strategic objectives. The section is set targets for the number of units achieved, but there are no targets for either retention and achievement. The management information system is not able to produce retention and achievement rates.

60. The quality assurance arrangements are incomplete and do not always ensure consistency. There are arrangements for the observation of lessons, but there is no moderation of observation to ensure consistency. Staff in the ICT section were involved in the self-assessment process of the education department. However, this was not sufficiently self-critical and the development plan was not sufficiently detailed.

61. The teaching team meets on a quarterly basis to discuss issues and share good practice. The ICT co-ordinator also meets with the education manager on a regular basis. However, the co-ordinators do not often meet with the ICT co-ordinators of other prisons with which the college has a contract, or with ICT specialists from the college.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

62. Training in PE is unsatisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good pass rates
- very effective induction and support for learners
- good practical coaching

Weaknesses

- inadequate facilities
- over-reliance on informal processes
- poorly planned training

Achievement and standards

63. Both courses have good pass rates. In 2002-03, 75 learners achieved qualifications. Of those who did not achieve, most were not able to complete their courses. Seven learners also achieved the communication key skill at level 2 as part of their training. Learners are well prepared before starting vocational programmes. Many learners progress to additional awards in weight training and are given practical sessions as an incentive to advance to a higher standard of performance. In practical activities, learners demonstrate good physical skills and understanding of the basic concepts of body management, physical fitness and various training regimes. During a volleyball session a group of learners who were new to the sport, and had a variable range of abilities, all learnt to serve accurately, despite the low ceiling.

Quality of education and training

64. Learners are given a comprehensive induction to the PE department. At the general prison induction they are given colourful, easily understood flow diagrams which explain what the PE department can offer and how to become involved. The PE staff are not involved at this stage. The positive benefits of the courses are not stressed sufficiently. Those prisoners interested in taking part then attend a thorough briefing and practical demonstration of the weight-training facility. Prisoners have the chance to try some of the equipment and are given a comprehensive descriptor of the benefits and correct operation. Information about the department includes rules and regulations and behavioural expectations. As part of the process, learners are given an individual interview where accurate records are taken of past achievements and future aspirations.

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Learners are issued with an induction card, which is required for entry to the gymnasium and is an excellent way to ensure only eligible learners participate. Not enough is done to attract and encourage other prisoners after this initial stage.

65. Practical activity coaching is of a very good standard. The staff are good role models, they are well prepared for sessions and demonstrate a variety of teaching techniques. There is a good ratio of learners to staff in most sessions, individual attention and support for learners is good. Staff demonstrate a range of skills appropriate to help learners and demonstrate empathy with the less able. In weight lifting sessions there is sufficient equipment for all learners, health and safety issues are observed effectively and the correction of techniques is excellent. Learners are given a clear explanation of the method of lifting, followed by a good practical demonstration and ample time to practise. During practise time coaching tips are given continually to correct individual performance. Learners are encouraged to ask questions and in quieter groups the staff direct questions to each learner. Critical points and learning are checked throughout the session and most sessions conclude with a good summary and recapitulation of learning. Learning materials are not used sufficiently to support practical coaching and there are not enough visual examples. Assessment procedures and moderation on courses are satisfactory.

66. There are not enough facilities for training, and some of the existing ones are inadequate. The large weights room is very well equipped, has good ventilation and lighting and is exceptionally well maintained. It is a well-used facility and supports most physical activities and course options available to learners. There is a comprehensive range of light and heavy free weights and complementary machine equipment to exercise all muscle groups. However, there is not enough cardio-vascular equipment. The sports hall is too small and has severe structural limitations. The ceiling is too low for all major sports and the storage of some equipment represents a health and safety hazard. Additional storage space and changing and showering facilities are too cramped. The department does not have a classroom or background knowledge study area and no outdoor facilities.

Leadership and management

67. Communication with and among the staff team relies too much on informal contact. The small team of staff work very well together and have good communication, but rarely record critical information about learners' progress, training or particular situations. They tend to rely on verbal discussions or general observations. There is no obvious, or transparent decision-making process. Many decisions are made in a subjective way and cannot be checked. The selection of learners for courses and to privileged orderly positions are made as a result of team discussions. Records that are kept are often only descriptive and do not contain professional judgements about the quality or standard of performance in relation to expectation levels or national standards. End of session reports are adequate, but do not lead to recommendations for improvements or developments of the course content or delivery. Not all learners have learning plans or achievement targets. It is not possible to measure positive achievement, other than by the final outcome. Quality assurance arrangements are

weak, with no formal method of carrying out teaching and learning observations.

68. Roles and responsibilities within the team are clear and a good rapport exists between the team and the senior officer. It is an open style of management, but development of the curriculum has been restricted by the prison regimes and this has caused frustration. The staff structure has no spare capacity. Recently qualified staff cannot gain developmental experiences of managing courses. Staff are very well qualified in many sports, but do not have teaching qualifications. However, one officer is attending an introductory teaching course at a local college. The senior officer sets and expects a high standard of performance and all staff are good role models for the learners. On one occasion, the use of inappropriate language by learners was not corrected or commented on by staff. During coaching and instructing sessions some staff also use inappropriate language, including personal views to demonstrate issues or give examples. Equal opportunities issues are not sufficiently reinforced through the use of posters or other displays.

69. Training is poorly planned. A PE timetable effectively allows all learners to participate in activities on at least three occasions each week. The sessions are not activity based and insufficient allowance is made for variable-sized groups. Learners who cannot attend during the day are allocated four sessions, but this is a small minority of the total population. Learners interested in a specific sport do not have specialist sessions, they can therefore only operate at a basic level. Insufficient planning exists to integrate minority ethnic sports, or include more aerobic options. There is no schedule for offering minor sports, although this does occur on an irregular basis and includes the recent introduction of carpet bowls. Annual planning does not include a sufficient range of other, useful short courses, more advanced programmes or seasonal variations to add to the learners' experience and provide more employment skills. The two courses that are provided are not sufficiently well developed to include additional positive outcomes. One of them has been used to provide evidence for the key skills in communication, but no provision is made for learners to achieve any of the remaining key skills or literacy and numeracy skills. Some initial preparations have been made for a healthy living course and work on a drug rehabilitation programme, in conjunction with the health care team.

Foundation programmes

70. Training in foundation programmes is satisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good-quality portfolios and written work
- good individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- some poor accommodation and resources
- insufficient analysis of trends to contribute to planning and decision-making

Achievement and standards

71. The achievement of accredited awards is satisfactory on most foundation courses. Most prisoners, however, do not remain at the prison for long enough to achieve qualifications. The average length of prisoners' stay is approximately 20 weeks. The prison's education department meets its key targets for the achievement of literacy and numeracy qualifications. In the 12 months to December 2003, 36 learners achieved literacy and numeracy qualifications at entry level, 185 at level 1 and 99 at level 2. Learners gained other literacy and numeracy awards: 103 in total at a variety of levels. In the same period 19 learners have achieved key skills qualifications.

72. Learners produce good-quality key skills portfolios, within the education centre and in open learning sessions on the wings or in the kitchens. Portfolios contain relevant evidence from a wide range of sources and are well structured, allowing the reader to easily gain a good understanding of the subject matter. Portfolios contain a lot of information in graphical form which clearly illustrate areas of research. ICT is well used to enhance the quality of both the content and presentation of portfolios. Literacy and numeracy skills learners use a variety of methods to record and save learning session content. Some learners use simple exercise books, others use more comprehensive folders. Learners are encouraged to present their work neatly and they take pride in the work produced. Examples of some learners' work are displayed on classroom walls and promote good practice.

73. Learners are well supported. Tutors offer a very good level of individual support in learning sessions. The wide range of abilities and experiences within groups sometimes makes whole group teaching problematic. Tutors recognise that many learners are quite transient and work hard to assist them during their time with the education department. There is also good individual support for those learners who are taking part in open learning on the wings and in the kitchen. Learners are given good advice and guidance to help them with their portfolios of evidence. Arrangements are made for them to visit the education department to use the ICT equipment to enhance their work. The support offered is appreciated by the learners who respond by producing good-quality work.

74. Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learning sessions are well planned and tutors take care to produce a range of relevant and interesting learning materials. A range of materials is made available to learners to cater for the wide range of abilities within groups. Tutors and learners have a good rapport and a constructive atmosphere is generated during sessions that is conducive to learning. Tutors are hampered, however, by the short stay of many learners and the poor attendance at many of the observed sessions. Sessions have insufficient activity-based learning and learning sessions lack variety. Not enough use is made of themes within literacy and numeracy skills sessions, as a method of improving learners' involvement and interest. ICT access is limited in most sessions, as is the use of TV and video to enhance the learning experience.

75. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Approximately 50 per cent of all prisoners take part in an initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills. The results of the assessment are used to determine the correct level of course for those that choose education as one of their options. Not enough diagnostic assessment is currently being carried out and there are no methods to formally identify specific learning difficulties, for example, dyslexia. Action plans and progress review documents are used to record progress and set realistic targets. The education department uses the college's verification and moderation procedures to ensure the quality and compliance to awarding body requirements of its accredited awards. Learners receive regular feedback and are aware of their progress.

76. The current range of provision is satisfactory. Courses are available from entry level through to level 4 in some cases. The department is partly restricted in its curriculum by central requirements in terms of key targets. Learners would welcome the opportunity to take part in a range of courses during evenings and weekends.

77. Some of the accommodation and learning resources are poor. The classroom in one wing is poorly equipped and decorated. There are not enough tables and chairs for learners and there is limited storage for resources. Prison staff regularly use the room as a connecting corridor to another wing of the prison and disrupt classes. However, the room is currently undergoing a complete facelift and additional furniture and storage cupboards are due to be installed. Classrooms in the education department are satisfactory and suitable for the size of groups attending. Many examples of learners' work are displayed throughout the centre. Many of the learning resources are outdated and do not reflect current literacy and numeracy and key skills learning methods. A

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significant number of textbooks are old and to some extent out of date. The ICT facilities are old and access is restricted. Learners' are able to use laptop computers during some sessions, but are unable to print or save their work easily.

Leadership and management

78. Management of the education department is satisfactory. Tutors work well as a team and regularly share good practices and experiences. Access to training is good and tutors are able to take part in short training days, core curriculum for example, and longer courses leading to a range of teaching qualifications. Two members of staff are starting the new level 4 literacy and numeracy teaching qualification. Tutors have good working relationships with other members of the prison staff. Tutors do feel, however, sometimes isolated from the main college and would welcome a greater level of support from the management. Tutors would also welcome the opportunity to meet regularly with staff from other prisons to share experiences and increase their awareness of current teaching practice.

79. The education department does not analyse trends which may contribute to planning and decision-making. The results of initial assessments are not analysed sufficiently to identify the academic ability of learners and allow the purchase of appropriate resources. The number of learners taking part in the range of education courses is not routinely recorded. The management are aware of the number of places being filled, but many learners are attending more than one class. Achievement is not analysed against attendance and judgements about the level of achievement are difficult. Comprehensive attendance records are kept but the identified reasons for non-attendance of learners are purely anecdotal, as no analysis takes place.